

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Serial No. 10/680,140
Sughrue Ref: Q77881

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are all the claims pending in the application. By way of this amendment, Applicant has amended the specification as well as claim 1 of the application. In addition, Applicant submits herewith corrected Figures 5 and 6, labeled "PRIOR ART", as requested by the Examiner. It is believed that the above amendments to the specification overcome the Examiner's objection thereto.

Claims 1-5 are pending in the application, and have been rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bird, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,376,565). For the following reasons, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The invention is directed to a connector which includes a first connector housing 12 and a second connector housing 20, where the connector housings have a guide arrangement which allows the housings to be connected together with reduced friction. To that end, housing 12 includes a first guide member 17, and housing 20 includes a second guide member for receiving the first guide member. According to the invention, the first and second guide members are configured to contact each other along either a plurality of points or along a line when the two are connected together. The different embodiments of the invention are illustrated in Figures 3A, 3B, 4A and 4B.

In the rejection, the Examiner states that he has failed to give any patentable weight to the requirement of claim 1 that the first and second guide members come into point or line contact with each other. Hence, the Examiner contends that Bird, et al. anticipates the claims. More specifically, the Examiner contends that Bird, et al. discloses a first housing 12 having a first

guide member 70, shown in Figure 4, and a second connector housing 14 having a second guide member 86, which receives the first guide member.

Applicant submits that Bird, et al. fails to teach or suggest configuring the key 70 or the related groove 86 in such a manner that they form either point to point or line to line contact, as claim 1 requires. To the contrary, if at all, it appears that the slot 86 is configured to mate with the key 77 to form planar contact therebetween. In short, the reference fails to teach or even remotely suggest the invention recited in claim 1. Further, Applicant submits that it is improper for the Examiner not to consider the inventive feature discussed above and now clearly recited in independent claim 1. Therefore, it is submitted that independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the Bird, et al. reference.

With respect to the dependent claims, they are patentable based on their dependency from claim 1. Further, the dependent claims are patentable based on the limitations contained therein. For example, claim 3 recites that either the rib member or the groove is formed with protrusions and the other is provided with flat faces on which the protrusions slide. This is clearly not taught or suggested in the reference. More specifically, claim 3, in conjunction with claim 1, requires that the protrusion slide along the flat faces in either point to point contact or the line-to-line contact. This is simply not taught or suggested in Bird, et al.

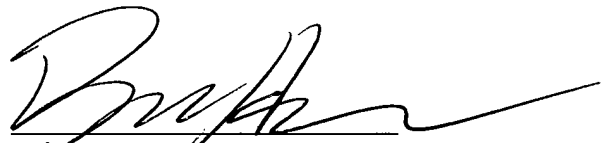
Also, with respect to dependent claim 4, the Examiner seems to correspond the members 80 of Bird, et al. to the claimed protrusion. However, the proximal end portion of each of the members 80 is not narrowed, as required by claim 4. Thus, it is believed that claims 3 and 4 are patentable based on these additional reasons.

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In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the application be passed to issue at the earliest possible convenience. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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